UNITED
NATIONS

DP

Governing Council
of the
United Nations
Development Programme

Distr.
GENERAL

DP/CP/RAP/NOTE/1
6 March 1992

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Thirty-ninth session
4-29 May 1992, Geneva
Item 6 of the provisional agenda

PROGRAMME PLANNING

Country and intercountry programmes and projects

COUNTRY PROGRAMMES FOR THE COOK ISLANDS, KIRIBATI, NIUE, SAMOA, THE SOLOMON ISLANDS, TOKELAU AND TUVALU

Note by the Administrator*

I. PREPARATORY PROCESS

1. The seven country programmes in the Pacific presented here have resulted from a continuous consultative process between the Governments, UNDP, the relevant agencies of the United Nations system, especially the members of the Joint Consultative Group on Policy (JCGP), and other donors.

2. The Governments, through their respective aid coordination units, took the lead role in establishing priority development needs and in guiding the overall orientation of the new country programmes. The round-table process in three countries, as well as other more informal aid coordination meetings, facilitated the process.

3. The mid-term reviews, conducted by all seven countries in 1989, reached similar conclusions which are now reflected in the respective country programmes, with the endorsement of the Pacific governments concerned.

---

* The present note contains the Administrator's recommendations concerning the country programmes contained in documents DP/CP/CKI/3, DP/CP/KIR/3, DP/CP/NIU/4, DP/CP/SAM/5, DP/CP/SOI/5, DP/CP/TOK/3 and DP/CP/TUV/3.

4. They concluded that the comparative advantages of UNDP lay in its flexibility in meeting changing priorities and emerging needs, in the provision of cost-effective stop-gap expertise in the form of specialists from the United Nations Volunteers programme (UNV) and in the complementary role of the Pacific subregional programme.

5. At the same time, however, there was a consensus on the need to concentrate resources on fewer areas of highest, medium- and long-term priority with a view towards reinforcing sustained impact. It was further agreed that interventions should be made in future so as to achieve a greater balance between stop-gap assistance, transfer of skills and efforts for capacity-building. Increased training in development management was also recommended as another dimension of capacity-building.

6. Following this process, the areas to be supported by the limited IPF resources were determined by each Government in consultation with UNDP after careful review of their respective priority needs, proposed interventions of other donors, UNDP's comparative advantages, and the areas of focus mandated by the Governing Council.

7. Programming missions will be fielded in the near future to define the nature and scope of the Governments' proposals for UNDP cooperation in selected areas, in the context of which the roles of other donors and agencies of the United Nations system will be more fully defined. Mindful of the need to make the country programmes more result-oriented, programme formulation will, inter alia, provide benchmarks in order to facilitate future monitoring and reviews of country programmes.

II. ANALYTICAL COMMENTARY ON THE COUNTRY PROGRAMMES

8. There is a strong convergence of priority needs which have been identified by the seven Governments for UNDP intervention. The paramount thrust is towards policy, administrative and programme support for human development in four basic development themes: (a) support to disadvantaged groups; (b) income generation, employment and private sector development; (c) public sector administration; and (d) environmental and sustainable development. There are of course variations in emphasis, project strategy and modality foreseen among the several countries. The Governments' focus on high impact in selected areas represents a shift towards a more programme oriented approach, compared with the lack of concentration which characterized previous country programmes. The new programmes also show an awareness of how the Governments acknowledge the complementarity and comparative advantages of UNDP cooperation relative to the proportionately larger official development assistance (ODA) received by the Pacific island countries from other donors.

A. Support to disadvantaged groups

9. The isolation of small island countries, and their dispersed, small populations spread over very large surface areas, has led in the past to the tendency to concentrate aid and development on the capital cities and central islands. Over the years the result is a significant imbalance in available social services and the level of human development between capital islands and more remote rural areas and outer islands. Hence, the themes of poverty alleviation and human development translate themselves, in the Pacific context, into support to disadvantaged groups and redressing the urban/rural imbalance in development. In the Pacific, moreover, the rural area and the village community will continue to form the basis for a particular country's productive activities in harmony with its national culture and values.

10. Due to the special importance attached by Governments to rural regions, income generation and poverty, especially in the outer islands of the countries in the Pacific, the country programmes allocate a large portion of resources to this area of concentration with the following objectives: first, enhancing the production base and raising the income/employment level of the populations through support to smallholder agriculture, fisheries, processing industries and skills training; and, second, enhancing the level of such essential social services as basic-level education, health, safe water supply, sanitation and awareness of population issues.

11. Detailed programming will be undertaken for the social services sub-theme in collaboration with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the World Health Organization (WHO). Backstopping and added support for the first sub-theme is expected from the regional Poverty Alleviation and Equitable Human Development Programme currently being formulated under the fifth-cycle subregional programme.

12. It is expected that in this area of intervention there will be an increase in the income levels of disadvantaged groups, increased participation of the rural community in the development of their islands, and an increased capacity of the social sector to deliver basic social services in rural areas.

B. Income generation, employment and private sector development

13. To complement the technical cooperation activities outlined above, most of the Governments propose that IPF resources be used to support the development of small-scale industries. Although many Governments have tried to promote private sector initiatives and investment in small-scale industries, private sector growth has been constrained by: a scarcity of business skills, technical knowledge and market information; the relative scarcity of domestic capital; and the dominance of public sector enterprises.

14. UNDP resources will support the provision of advisory services, training and extension services, especially those needed in the areas of marketing,

technical advice in business development, and in the management of small-scale manufacturing activities, including those initiated by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and local communities. In some cases the programme would also enhance access to capital financing through various United Nations and bilateral schemes.

15. Complementary assistance will be provided through the subregional programme for Small-Scale Industry Development and the South Pacific Project Development Facility (SPPF) as well as the United Nations International Short-Term Advisory Resources (UNISTAR), the Transfer of Knowledge Through Expatriate Nationals (TOKTEN), technical cooperation among developing countries (TCDC) and the specialized agencies of the United Nations system including the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

C. Public sector administration

16. For many years, the Pacific island countries have supported inefficient and oversized public sectors. The resulting excessive regulation and extensive public involvement in the economy has been neither conducive to foreign investment nor to vigorous private sector growth. Economic management and development planning, moreover, is based in most of these countries on traditional planning approaches which, combined with a lack of capacity and systems for policy formulation and implementation, has had a constraining influence.

17. The proposed support to public administration, therefore, is a timely effort to achieve: (a) improved efficiency and productivity of the public sector; (b) accelerated commercialization, corporatization and privatization of public enterprises; and (c) the establishment of sound macroeconomic and fiscal policies as well as strategic development planning oriented towards selected priorities.

18. Recently, a number of development planning projects supported under the several country programmes were reviewed. The results questioned the practical value and usefulness of the traditional approach of planning in the Pacific context. Instead, the adoption of a rolling approach focusing on priority areas of strategic importance and closer linkage to recurrent budgets and investment plans was recommended. Future UNDP support in development policy formulation and planning will be addressed at the subregional level. All the activities in the three sub-areas mentioned above will be supported by the Economic and Financial Management and Reform Programme at the subregional level. Financial support from Special Programme Resources (SPR) and the Management Development Programme (MDP) will also be used for some of the countries.

D. Environmental and sustainable development

19. Whereas the South Pacific subregional programme is the main source of environmental assistance under the auspices of the South Pacific Environmental Programme, which is supporting the development and implementation of national environmental management strategies, the second area of focus proposed for the fifth cycle aims to enhance national capability for the planning, policies and management of environmental and sustainable development as it relates to land use, in-shore marine resource utilization, watershed and forest management, environmental impact assessment and other areas. Development of environmental tourism is suggested for the Cook Islands. The sustainability of forests in the Solomon Islands requires special attention and has been selected as a major area for the focus of that country programme. In Kiribati, efforts will be made to ensure that the proposed decentralized development of outer islands, especially the resettlement scheme of the Line Islands which the country programme will support, does not result in the degradation of the forest cover and the reef ecosystem, which has already happened on the main atoll of Tarawa. Samoa needs careful management of both the watershed areas and the nearshore reef areas which have been under considerable pressure due to overfishing. The country programme will be supporting the national effort in both these areas. Again, country programme activities will be closely supported by the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme, a Global Environment Facility (GEF) regional biodiversity programme, as well as by the regional forestry and fisheries programmes. Improved policies and policy formulating capacity is envisaged as a result of proposed interventions by UNDP.

20. Within the four programme areas described above, particular attention will be given to the role of women and their potential contribution to and benefit from community-based, sustainable development, especially in the areas of education and health improvement, vocational skills training, and indigenous entrepreneurial development. This will be done through working with local institutions that recognize women's actual potential and contributions to the development of their nations. In development policy advice and planning, gender-sensitive strategies will be adopted with a view to maximizing the contribution of women to development. Some of the countries have already taken steps towards this direction, supported by the programme cofinanced by the Pacific multi-island indicative planning figure (IPF) and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) with an added contribution from Australia. During the fifth cycle, continued regional support will be made through the UNDP-supported subregional programmes for Poverty Alleviation and Human Development, and Economic and Financial Management and Reform.

21. Mindful of the recommendations of the mid-term reviews, and of the need to maximize the quality and impact of limited IPFs, the future roles of UNDP-funded personnel and their respective counterparts will be more carefully designed and systematically monitored in an effort to improve the process of the transfer of skills and capacity-building. The training options to be made available to counterparts will also be the subject of review in order to ensure relevance and appropriateness.

22. Recognizing that all seven Pacific countries are prone to hurricanes, UNDP will continue to respond to emergency needs within its competence through financing from SPR and through the allocation of IPF resources outside the current focus of the country programmes. Disaster preparedness and prevention measures will be reflected in the national programmes.

23. Building on its proven comparative advantages in the Pacific region, UNDP will offer to assist Pacific governments in the creation of a policy environment conducive to the design and formulation of comprehensive and integrated development programmes. Within this context, initiatives designed to broaden sustainability and impact will be promoted through the programme approach.

III. MANAGEMENT OF COUNTRY PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION

24. In pursuing the objectives described above and taking account of the need to work increasingly with community groups, such cost-effective modalities as UNV and TCDC will continue to be used on an expanded basis. Cooperation with local NGOs will be strengthened with the expectation to extend the regional Domestic Development Services (DDS) project and support to a new Pacific Islands NGO federation. In addition, greater use will be made of other such cost-effective modalities as UNISTAR and TOKTEN.

25. Despite the constraint of limited population size in the seven countries, UNDP will help build national capacity, where feasible, in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of development programmes. At the same time, it is expected that national execution of UNDP cooperation will be progressively expanded.

26. The UNDP role in supporting aid coordination will be further strengthened, in collaboration with the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank and other donors. It is notable that the Governments of the Cook Islands, Samoa and Tuvalu have recently convened round-table meetings with UNDP support. In addition, the Governments of Kiribati and the Solomon Islands have expressed interest in the round-table process. More flexible mechanisms for the round-table process will be developed and applied starting in 1992.

27. The regional and the Pacific subregional programmes, which are active in several sectors, will continue to provide substantial complementary assistance to national programmes through technical backstopping, including the components funded by UNDP and bilateral programmes. Particular attention will be paid to the establishment of baseline data and benchmarks for the national programmes supported by UNDP. These will enable an objective evaluation to be made of the progress achieved through collaborative efforts.

IV. RECOMMENDATION OF THE ADMINISTRATOR

28. The country programmes for the Pacific islands address key issues confronting the countries and their peoples. UNDP will provide technical cooperation to address the strategic and critical issues which the countries face and will play a catalytic role in creating the necessary enabling environment to correct economic and social imbalances.

29. In providing this technical cooperation, the areas of focus for UNDP intervention, established by the Governing Council, will be addressed. The programmes are so formulated as to make a sustainable impact on the countries, especially in terms of promoting human development, through poverty alleviation and more sustainable exploitation of its natural resources.

30. The Administrator, therefore, recommends that the Governing Council approve the country programmes for the Cook Islands, Kiribati, Niue, Samoa, the Solomon Islands, Tokelau and Tuvalu.